



Emergency Management

UPDATE

June 2001

State plans integrated FMD response effort

By Bob Lambert, Staff Writer

A broad spectrum of state agencies is drawing up plans to respond to a potential outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, which can spread quickly among cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, sheep and pigs.

The disease doesn't affect humans but causes disabling viral blisters in animals. As humans and animals **not infected** can easily spread it from contact with infected animals, authorities recommend "depopulating" herds where there is an outbreak. Even petting zoos are at risk.

In England, about 10 percent of the population of sheep, cattle and pigs have been killed to control the disease. Rigid quarantines and extensive use of disinfectants such as chlorine bleach help limit the

disease, which can be spread by contaminated clothing and shoes.

Veterinarians exposed to the virus must wait 36 hours before going from one farm to another.

Virginia officials estimate an outbreak could have a broad direct and indirect economic impact here, possibly as much as \$250 million.

According to VDEM Technological Hazards Division Director Brett Burdick, who led a two-month review of the state's response plan, "We are looking at it as part of our all-hazards approach to emergency management."

The cost estimates include the loss of animals, disposal of carcasses and the impact on the economy and tourism. The

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Corralling an outbreak? State agencies are ready to respond should Virginia cattle become infected with foot-and-mouth disease. (Photo courtesy Office of Livestock Marketing, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.)

State takes control of Floyd 'temporary' housing park

Weeds now grow where a busy community once stood as VDEM takes control of the Southampton County Manufactured Housing Park June 17.

As many as 158 people, including elderly or disabled individuals and families displaced by Hurricane Floyd more than a year and a half ago, were living in temporary housing in the industrial park.

A total of 125 individuals were in 52 mobile housing units in the industrial park. Another 33 stayed in travel trailers.

All but 23 of the 52 mobile homes have been moved to other locations, and only a dozen individuals remain in travel trailers.

Of the remaining 23 units, 17 are being sold to the occupants and will be moved to Southampton Meadows, an expanded mobile home park about five miles away.

FEMA granted an 18-month temporary housing allotment for the displaced



The long road back. These trailers have been home to Floyd flood victims since late 1999.

families, which was extended another three months after it expired in March.

Establishing an adequate water supply for the new families in Southampton Meadows has been a major obstacle in closing out this housing program.

The Long Term Recovery Committee, which includes representatives from the

city of Franklin and Southampton and Isle of Wight counties, has been guiding the housing recovery effort.

Barbara Moore-Scruggs, a planning supervisor with VDEM's Preparedness and Mitigation Division, has shuttled between Richmond and the Southampton community to help displaced individuals find permanent housing.

"Recovery from a disaster like Floyd takes years," Moore-Scruggs says. "Here, an existing housing shortage exacerbated the existing housing problems in the area."

"Recovery is truly a local issue and priority. When the localities are unable to fill the needs, then the state and federal government step in and do their best to resolve the situation."

Contact Barbara Moore-Scruggs at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6524, or bmoorescruggs@vdem.state.va.us to learn more.

Transmitter bracelet helps SAR

By Bob Lambert
Staff Writer

In the middle of the night an Alzheimer's patient wanders off unknowingly into danger.

It's hours before the individual is reported missing and a costly and time-consuming search begins.

In a growing number of Virginia communities, that scenario is far less likely if those who tend to wander off are wearing a standardized locator wrist bracelet.

The life safety program covers not only Alzheimer's patients, but also those suffering from Down's syndrome or autism. Similar to devices used to monitor wildlife, the bracelet is an inexpensive solution to a potentially resource intensive and not always successful search and rescue effort. Chesapeake is serving as a clearinghouse for the acquisition of the necessary equipment and the training to operate it.

Currently, more than 150 bracelets are in use across the state. Southside Hampton Roads, Danville, and Amherst, Pittsylvania and Rockingham counties account for 126. Nearly a dozen more counties are considering the system and eight states have requested more information.

A pair of receivers and two-day training session for 15 operators requires an initial outlay of about \$5,200. The water-resistant transmitters, with a range of up to a mile on the ground and seven to nine miles from the air, cost about \$260. There is also a small monthly fee for transmitter maintenance and changing the batteries.

"A four-day search for a missing subject could cost as much as \$400,000," says Col. Gene Saunders, Chesapeake Sheriff's Office. "With the transmitter bracelet, two officers can locate and bring in the individual in a matter of minutes."

So far in Southside Hampton Roads, authorities have responded to 36 wandering patient calls with an average recovery time of 16 minutes. Rockingham County is among the localities recently implementing the bracelet program.

An incident last year prompted their involvement in this life safety initiative. A 40-year-old mentally challenged man was missing for 23 hours before he was found. Lt. Wes Jordan, Rockingham County Sheriff's Office, estimates it cost \$29,000 to mount the search for the man, including an aerial search.

"We're getting the word out to civic groups and hospitals looking for caregivers to set up the program," says Jordan. "The transmitter's another tool we can use for search and rescue," Jordan says. "It also gives caregivers their lives back."

For further information, contact Col. Gene Saunders, Chesapeake Sheriff's Office, at (757) 432-4382 (e-mail: varanger@pinn.net) or Lt. Wes Jordan, Rockingham County Sheriff's Office, at (540) 564-3818.



Locating the lost. Many Virginia communities are using bracelets like this one to streamline searches. (Photo by R. Steve Dick, University of Kansas Office of University Relations.)



A challenging day. (Left to Right) Australian students Michael Logan, Jeff Harper and Raymond Bott take a breather to discuss their training experience with VDEM Hazmat Training Manager Ron Hargrave.

Down Under trainees 'survive' hazmat course

This spring's Virginia hazmat technician class took on an international flavor when three Australian emergency managers from Queensland traveled to Richmond for a two-week hazmat training session.

"We wanted a look at your teaching methods and expertise," said Michael Logan, PhD, CHEM unit, Queensland, Australia, Counter Disaster and Rescue Services, Department of Emergency Services.

Joining Logan were Raymond Bott, PhD, scientific officer, Queensland Counter Disaster and Rescue Services, and Jeff Harper, safety equipment manager, Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority.

The group came to Virginia in response to an invitation one of them received last year from VDEM Training Manager Ron Hargrave at a Baltimore, Md., hazmat conference.

They wanted to learn more about how the Commonwealth's program, one of the few with a statewide approach for training, planning and response, could help back home. They also viewed hazmat operations in Fredericksburg, Fairfax, Chesapeake, Alexandria and Henrico.

Bott contrasted Virginia's approach to back home. "I was interested in the practical stuff, comparing the clothing set up, dealing with heat stress and the breathing apparatus," he said.

Dressed out in heavy, fully-encapsulated hazmat suits, the three Australians easily survived training in 80-plus degree temperatures at the Hanover Fire Department training facility near Ashland — they're used to the desert heat Down Under.

Queensland, Australia's second largest state, is eight times the size of Virginia with about half the people. A large accident can happen in the middle of nowhere. In fact, responders had to cut a road to get to a recent accident site.

Faced with this daunting geography, Queensland emergency managers rely heavily on volunteers, who are often company engineers or chemists at the site of industrial facilities. "It's the tyranny of distance and our ability to support people in remote locations," says Harper.

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Salem sports policy strikes out lightning

By Bob Lambert, Staff Writer

If a lightning policy is good enough for NCAA softball players using Salem's James I. Moyer Sports Complex, then it should apply to anyone using the 22-acre, four-field facility.

That's the rationale the city's Department of Parks and Recreation used when they recently established a uniform policy to ensure the safety of all sports patrons.

The fields get plenty of use — just when thunder and lightning storms are most likely to come crashing over the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Seven days a week, there is an almost continual parade of high-level tournament competition coupled with the boys and girls of summer who jam the complex waiting to practice or play.

"We have some bad storms, mostly June, July and August," says John Shaner, sports complex manager. "July is usually the worst."



Playing by the rules. John Shaner shows Roanoke College Softball Coach Alan Bayse the lightning policy at the "bracket board" (Courtesy Photo).

In the past, the complex staff had to enforce stringent NCAA lightning rules whenever they hosted tournaments.

"Yet, the rules didn't apply to anyone else using it at the same time," Shaner says. "We think our kids using the fields are entitled to the same level of protection from lightning as the college students."

"Now we have a uniform written policy and a \$200 lightning detector installed to monitor the ball parks."

Shaner and Salem Emergency Services Coordinator

Danny Hall began working on the citywide policy a year ago and have held a workshop on the policy for the region. "Part of being a good host is to protect your guests," Hall says.

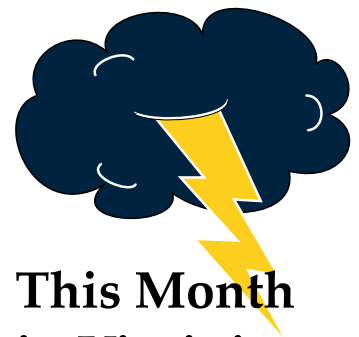
Tournament directors, coaches and umpires must follow the policy or accept personal responsibility for any casualties.

Now, Moyer Sports Complex officials hope when lightning steps up to the plate, they can score it a "strike out." Once the alarm is sounded, all ball players, officials and spectators will head for cover.

Game's over, at least until it's safe to play again.

To learn more, contact Danny Hall by phone at (540) 375-3080 or e-mail at dhall@ci.salem.va.us. John Shaner can be reached at (540) 375-4021 (e-mail: jshaner@usit.net).

An expanded version of this article as well as extensive lightning safety information is available at our Web site, www.vdem.state.va.us.



This Month in Virginia Storm History

A family was enjoying a late spring afternoon June 16, 1994, on Lake Moomaw in Bath County when they noticed a sudden thunderstorm approaching.

Taking refuge on a small treed island only 300 by 100 yards wide, they sought shelter under some tall pines.

Lightning struck the trees, the tallest objects around for some distance, killing the entire family of five instantly. They ranged in age from 10 to 63 years old.

E-emergency excellence cited

The State and Local Emergency Management Data Users Group has cited the Virginia Department of Transportation for excellence in its Internet-based Virginia Operational Information System.

The Virtual Emergency Operations Center, a Virginia-based volunteer group, was the runner-up.

This year marks the first time the professional association has presented awards. Seven organizations participated, including two state agencies, one local agency, one volunteer agency, two university teams and one team from Australia.

Contact Dr. Walter Green at wgreen@richmond.edu for details about these awards.

Student weather watchers tour hurricane hunter plane

Last month, 16 fifth graders and two of their teachers got a first-hand look at one of the Orion P3 hurricane hunter planes making a tour of cities along the East Coast.

Alexandria Emergency Services Coordinator Charles McRorie arranged the trip for the Cora Kelly Magnet School, which regularly contributes data to WRC Channel 4 (NBC) as part of its school-based weather network.

Located in Alexandria close to the airport, the Kelly school itself is vulnerable to flooding during hurricanes and was inundated 26 years ago by Hurricane Eloise.

Barbara Watson, National Weather Service Warning Coordination Meteorologist (Sterling, Va., Office), described how the plane tracks hurricanes. Then, the students went aboard to see the cockpit and sit in the pilot's seat, view the racks of weather telemetry equipment and see the drop zone area in the rear of the craft.

Hurricane season begins June 1. For more information about hurricane preparedness, visit our Web site at www.vdem.state.va.us.



Storm team gets grounded. Alexandria students take a tour of the hurricane hunter plane. (Photo courtesy of Charlie McRorie.)

Training Calendar

Emergency Management

EOC Management & Operations
June 26-28/Newport News

Principles of Emergency Mgmt.
July 10-12/Roanoke

Leadership & Influence
July 24-26/Richmond

Reservist Training

**VEOC Tabletop Exercise/
Media Awareness Workshop/
Asking for Help Workshop**
June 5/Richmond

Search and Rescue

SAR Council Meeting
July 28/Richmond

Technological Hazards

**Public Safety Response to
Terrorism — Awareness**
June 5/Richmond
June 23-24/Pittsylvania County

Hazmat Planning & Mgmt.
June 22-24/Northern Virginia

**Public Safety Response
to Terrorism —
Tactical Considerations**
July 16-17 & 18-19/Dahlgren

**Chemistry of
Hazardous Materials**
July 16-20 & 23-27/Ft. Pickett

The VEMA Summer Conference is
coming to Roanoke, Aug. 15-17!

FMD Response Effort (continued from page 1)

state also is planning its response to outbreaks in neighboring states or regions. Officials are particularly worried about:

- Sheep and cattle concentrations in the Shenandoah Valley Interstate 81 corridor
- Pig operations in Southeastern Virginia
- Numerous wild deer throughout Virginia

As in other types of disasters, VDEM will work to coordinate response efforts among state agencies. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will assume the lead in the field with primary assistance from the departments of Emergency Management, Game and Inland Fisheries and State Police.

"Our goal is to prevent, contain, eradicate and recover from an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease," Burdick says.

For more information, contact Brett Burdick at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6569, or by e-mail at bburdick@vdem.state.va.us.

Down Under (continued from page 2)

VDEM's practical training approach to handling hazmat accidents interested Harper. "We had a chance to compare what we currently do and an opportunity to benchmark ourselves," he said.

Despite the differences in size and climate, Logan found Virginia hazmat officers facing similar problems, such as proper labeling of hazmat shipments and the use of standardized terminology rather than brand names. They also prepare for terrorism incidents.

Greg Britt, VDEM hazmat response branch manager, said the 26 Virginia hazmat students participating in the two-week program got a chance to learn from interacting with the international visitors.

Hargrave agreed the learning process during the two-week session was two-way. "We all benefited from sharing our approaches to emergency management," he says.

To learn about VDEM's hazmat training program, contact Ron Hargrave by e-mail at rhargrave@vdem.state.va.us or by phone at (804) 897-6500, ext. 6573. Visit our *Queensland Emergency Services* course graduates at <http://home.pacific.net.au/~chem/>. An expanded version of this article is available on our Web site at www.vdem.state.va.us/emupdate.

Critzer confines his fireworks to the 4th



In his spare time, Gary Critzer, Waynesboro emergency services coordinator and pyrotechnic expert, likes to see the sky light up with spectacular displays of man-made fireworks.

At work, he'd just as soon have Mother Nature forget about showing off. Just in case he's ignored, Critzer uses preparedness and mitigation to ensure his Central Virginia community is ready for whatever disaster comes his way.

Visit our Web site at www.vdem.state.va.us/emupdate to learn how Critzer has helped to make his community more disaster-ready.



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